

THE NEA NEEDS OUR CONTINUING
SUPPORT

HON. FRANK PALLONE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 13, 1997

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the important role that the arts and humanities play in communities throughout our country.

As a strong proponent of the arts and as a member of the Congressional Arts Caucus, I believe that slashing funding for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities would be an irreversible blow to the arts and humanities in America. These influential agencies encourage lifelong learning, promote participation within civic organizations, and preserve our country's cultural and intellectual heritage.

The National Endowment for the Arts continues to lead all other arts organizations in encouraging the expansion of American art. The NEA strives to support excellence in our disparate American society. This organization fosters new design initiatives, encourages a renewed interest in dance, opera, and literature, and assists in the growth of new and previously established museums. In addition, the NEA remains a staunch advocate of arts in education. Studies illustrate that a student's desire to learn is facilitated by the mere presence of arts in the curriculum.

As a Congressman representing New Jersey's sixth district, I have seen, first hand, how the NEA has directly benefited my constituents. The NEA provided a \$6,000 grant to the George Street Playhouse, located in New Brunswick, a city that has been revitalized due to the explosion of the arts community. This \$6,000 grant helps support the Touring Theater which reaches over 70,000 New Jersey students through issue-oriented plays. These plays use theater as a vehicle to discuss both personal and social issues facing the youth of today.

Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey also received a \$12,500 grant from the NEA, to help fund a graduate-level internship in the Department of Prints and Drawings at the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, located on the Rutgers campus which is also in my district.

In New Jersey alone, the National Endowment for Humanities, in conjunction with the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, provided a \$525,000 grant making it possible for scholars at Rutgers University to edit Thomas Edison's notes for publication. A challenge grant from the NEH totalling \$550,000, has allowed the New Jersey Historical Society to raise \$2.2 million in private funds to renovate the building that contains its collections. The NEH also provided programs that enable Americans nationwide to participate in political, social, and cultural programs. Without funding to the NEH, New Jersey residents would not have access to free videotapes, radio programs, and traveling exhibits.

Supporting current funding levels for the NEA costs each taxpayer approximately 70 cents per year. A mere one-hundredth of 1 percent of the national budget goes towards these organizations. Federal funding for the arts and humanities has provided Americans with more than 1.3 million jobs. The new jobs

in turn pump hundreds of thousands of dollars into our local economies. For every dollar that the NEA spends, \$11 is generated in the form of tourism, hotels, restaurants, and cultural community activity. If our Government cuts funding and decides to privatize the NEA and NEH, only the large agencies and institutions would survive. The smaller institutions, on the other hand, would suffer an untimely demise without the necessary Federal funding.

These nonprofit organizations generate close to \$37 billion in economic activity in America while supporting 1.3 million jobs. In addition, the arts typically produce \$3.4 billion for the Federal Government in the form of income taxes, \$1.2 billion in State government revenue, and \$790 million in local government revenue. New Jersey's flourishing art community benefits greatly from the continued assistance from the NEA and NEH. New Jersey's 47,000 professional resident artists, and 800 cultural organizations provide approximately 15 million people with the opportunity to experience the arts in New Jersey. Close to 2.3 million school children benefit from arts projects that include student matinees, study guides, and classroom workshops.

The youth of today need art to help express themselves. As this year's cochair of the Congressional Art Competition, I know the importance of art in our daily lives.

"An Artistic Discovery" provides our youth with the opportunity to express their creative spirits. This unique, nationwide high school competition brings students together from all over the United States to celebrate the arts and their importance in our society.

The students' passion for the arts, epitomized in their work that brightens the Cannon Tunnel, makes a statement to the millions of visitors who pass through the tunnel that connects the Cannon Building with the U.S. Capitol.

The arts provide channels for emotional expression, and a chance for experimentation. Without the arts, our society would be devoid of all imagination. The arts permeate our culture and speak in a language all their own.

We need to support our national endowments, as well as all other vehicles that generate art that enriches our lives. Continued support for these institutions can expose our communities to diverse and even necessary schools of thought. These agencies help provide our country with a living record of civilization and society. The NEA and NEH stimulate local economies, preserve our national heritage, and encourage educational enrichment programs.

I urge my fellow colleagues to vote against slashing funding for the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, and to help ensure the survival of the arts in our society today.

ISRAEL SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN
MIDDLE EAST PEACE CON-
FERENCE

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 13, 1997

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of my colleagues a situation that threatens to upset the Middle East

peace process. Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat has reportedly invited leaders from throughout the world to participate in a weekend conference, supposedly to discuss ways to move the peace process forward.

While Mr. Arafat has invited diplomats from the United States, Japan, Egypt, Jordan, and Europe to participate in this conference, conspicuously absent is an invitation to the country of Israel.

How can a meeting supposedly designed to discuss ways to facilitate peace in the Middle East not include Israel? Obviously, it cannot. Any serious attempt to move the peace process forward should—and must—include Israel.

It does not take a scholar of Middle Eastern history or politics to know that Israel is integral to the region's future, as well as the success of the peace process itself. Excluding Israel from this proposed conference can only be seen as an attempt to fracture the world community's support for Israel and marginalize Israel's role in the peace process.

The United States must not let itself be manipulated in this way. I applaud President Clinton's efforts to bring peace to the Middle East, but we are at a very delicate point in the process, and we must be extremely careful about how we proceed. A primary tenet of the Oslo Accords is that peace negotiations should take place between Israel and Palestinian authorities. Allowing Mr. Arafat to make an end-run around Israel by excluding it from this meeting violates the principles of the Oslo Accords and poses a serious threat to the peace process.

Mr. Speaker, Yasir Arafat's call for a Middle Eastern peace conference is empty without the direct and meaningful participation of Israel. If the United States allows this conference to go forward in its current form, we will be doing irreparable harm to the peace process. Therefore, I urge you and my other colleagues to join me in calling on Yasir Arafat to include Israel in this weekend's meeting or to withdraw United States participation in this one-sided and counterproductive conference.

HONORING BUSHWICK GEO-
GRAPHIC TARGETING TASK
FORCE 1996 EXEMPLARY SUB-
STANCE ABUSE PREVENTION
PROGRAM

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 13, 1997

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the Bushwick Geographic Targeting Task Force [BGTF] as a 1996 exemplary substance abuse prevention program.

BGTF, 1 of 20 organizations selected by the Department of Health and Human Services, addresses the needs of Hispanic-Latino youth and young adults in North Brooklyn where a high rate of HIV/AIDS, violence, and substance abuse exists. Through courses and workshops in leadership skills, media literacy, and substance abuse prevention, the multifaceted needs of our youth are addressed. Moreover, BGTF's Partners in Health Coalition is a logical step in comprehensive community planning and program implementation for these services throughout the Brooklyn community.

As a Member of Congress, I have vigorously advocated for substance abuse prevention services targeting our at-risk youth. Thus,